Several Countries in Line For U.S. Thanks on Pueblo

From News Dispatches

A State Department spokesman said yesterday that the United States probably would thank several nations—including the Soviet Union—for whatever help they may have given in obtaining the release of the Pueblo crew.

After the North Koreans seized the intelligence ship last January, the United States made a world-wide effort to get other governments to assist in securing the release of the vessel and its crew.

The 82 surviving crewmen were finally freed Sunday night when the United States signed a confession of espionage and territorial violation against North Korean after repudiating its statement in advance.

State Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey said at a news conference yesterday that he does not know of any plan by the Government to try to explain this strange deal — which North Korea had agreed to—to other governments.

But he said it is possible that messages would be sent expressing appreciation for "what they may have done" to help get the men out.

The United States made repeated approaches to the Soviet government for such assistance, the most recent within the past two or three weeks.

U.S. officials said the action of Russia and other countries may have been influential, but they believe more decisive with the North Koreans was the U.S. willingness to sign North Korea's statement.

Members of Cnogress generally voiced delight at the release of the Pueblo crewmen, coupled with criticism of their North Korean captors.

"Words cannot express my feeling of happiness at their long overdue release," said Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.).

Sen. Thomas J. Dodd (D-Conn) said the "fraudulent Panmunjom confession" should be treated with contempt.